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religious significance by canons of historical criticism. A truer understanding both of the biblical conception of a "sign," and of the modern scientific attitude toward the world, would prevent many unfortunate and un-Christian controversies.

PSYCHOLOGY AND REGENERATION

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ELEMENT IN REGENERATION

The familiar testimony of the convert, "Those things which before I loved, now I hate, and those which before I hated, now I love" is constantly regarded as the normal Christian experience. To be sure, every Christian worker knows that the large majority of church members have had no experience which can truthfully be expressed in such language, while the great body of children and young people in the Sunday school cannot possibly give such testimony. And more and more it is coming to be recognized that the sudden transformation of temper and attitude is the exceptional rather than the typical religious experience. Yet the doctrine of regeneration has been formulated upon the basis of the exceptional experience and arbitrarily fitted to the normal and typical. The discussion of the doctrine has been generally on the basis of theology and scripture, but in the July number of the *American Journal of Theology*, Professor George A. Coe considers the question: "What does Modern Psychology permit us to believe in respect to Regeneration?" He makes a rigid distinction between the phases of the doctrine which are matters of theological speculation and the observable facts of consciousness, which are susceptible of psychological investigation. This distinction is fundamental. One may have theories as to the character of God and his relations to men, upon the truth or falsity of which psychology cannot possibly pass; but experiences are states of consciousness and as such are subjects of psychological study. When one claims to have an experience of being in "a state of grace," or of having become regenerate, or an experience of Christ or of the Holy Spirit or of some doctrine, these are psychological processes which can be analyzed and investigated.

MORAL AND SPIRITUAL STRUGGLE COMMON ALIKE TO THE REGENERATE
AND THE UNREGENERATE

Professor Coe points out that if the commonly supposed distinction between the regenerate and the unregenerate is real, it must be susceptible of proof. But the great majority of Christians have to attain moral victory by the "study-and-struggle" process, while many who are not regarded as regenerate, and do not so regard themselves, are not strangers to the same endeavor. Let it be granted that Christians by all the great sanctions and motives of their faith attain on the whole a far higher level. Still the mental and moral processes in the one case are not so different from those in the other as to warrant any such distinction as that between moral health and depravity.

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER A GROWTH, NOT A GIFT

In the same way it is shown that regeneration cannot be an infusion of a new life which is discontinuous with the old life. As a matter of fact, a wide study of cases of conversion reveals their entire psychological naturalness, while in the case of the large majority of persons whose religious education has been continuous, the process can only be regarded as a gradual maturing. All the experiences of the Christian depend on definite, recognizable, antecedent conditions. It would be pitiful indeed if it were not so, for how would one know how the religious experience could be attained? Professor Coe utters a very much needed warning when he shows how many earnest persons have been vainly seeking a new life which should somehow be given to them, instead of realizing the simple conditions of all moral victory and peace.

THE VALUE OF EXPERIENCE AS AUTHENTICATION OF DOGMA

But the most important part of this article is the discussion of the use of the religious experience for the authentication of theological doctrines. Dr. Coe sees the essentially healthy character of this current endeavor. It means that for the authority of history is substituted the authority of a living Christian experience. But of course the authority must be employed with great care if it is to establish dogma. When it is asserted that universal Christian experience establishes immediately the truth of certain doctrines to

the soul, the psychologist asks that very careful data be secured before any such specific "universal" experience be affirmed. As a matter of fact, there is no such general experience of regeneration that it can of itself authenticate the deity of Christ, the fact of his resurrection, the vicarious nature of the atonement. The psychologist recognizes, of course, that "the name of Jesus stands for a morally constructive power of the first rank." But the power of Jesus is that of the historic character known to us through the scriptures, through Christian history and institutions, through the whole spiritual influence of Jesus; and apart from these there is no such thing as an experience of Jesus. To assert it would be to go into the realm of Spiritism, which, to be sure, psychology does not absolutely forbid, but regarding which it must be extremely doubtful.

The real religious experience of conscious unity with God and constant striving after the moral ideal of Jesus, modern psychology more and more enables us to understand. And the earnest student, who finds God not in the unnatural, but in the natural and orderly, is glad of this scientific aid in recognizing the conditions by which such precious experience may be enjoyed.